

Application No. 10/673,809
Amendment dated 04/12/2006
Reply to Office Action of January 25, 2006

02-ASD-271(EM)

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as indicated below.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of sealing at a juncture of three members at assembly comprising:
 - (a) forming a one piece seal of elastically deformable material having a first, second and third portion each extending in a discrete direction from a common region thereof and configured for sealing the juncture of said three members;
 - (b) forming a strain distributor of material significantly less deformable than said first, second and third portion and embedding said distributor in said common region; and
 - (c) disposing said seal with said first, second and third portion sealing on said three members such that the strain distributor is disposed at the juncture of said three members.
2. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein said distributor is disposed in said common region at a juncture of two of said first, second and third portions thereof.
3. (Original) The method is defined in claim 1, wherein said distributor is formed of material having a hardness of at least 10 on the Shore "A" scale greater than the common region.
4. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein said distributor is formed of one of elastomeric, metallic and plastic material.
5. (Original) The method defined claim 1, wherein said step of forming a one piece seal includes molding.

Application No. 10/673,809
Amendment dated 04/12/2006
Reply to Office Action of January 25, 2006

02-ASD-271(EM)

6. (Original) The method defined claim 1, wherein said step of disposing said distributor includes insert molding.
7. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein said step of forming a one piece seal includes molding a member of elastomeric material.
8. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein said step of forming a one piece seal includes forming a seal of elastomeric material having a durometer not greater than 75 on the Shore "A" scale.
9. (Original) The method defined in claim 1, wherein the step of disposing includes forming an extension on one of said members.
10. (Currently Amended) The method defined in claim 9, wherein the step of forming an the extension includes interdigitating said extension with one of said first, second and third portions.
11. (Currently Amended) A seal for sealing at a juncture of three assembled members comprising:
 - (a) a common region formed of elastically deformable material;
 - (b) at least three projections formed integrally with said common region and extending outwardly therefrom each in a discrete direction; and,
 - (c) a strain distributor formed of material significantly stiffer than said central portion and said three projections and embedded in said common region, wherein the strain distributor is arranged to be disposed at the juncture of the three assembled members.
12. (Original) The seal defined in claim 11, wherein said central portion and projections are formed of material having a durometer not greater than about 75 on the Shore "A" scale.

Application No. 10/673,809
Amendment dated 04/12/2006
Reply to Office Action of January 25, 2006

02-ASD-271(EM)

13. (Original) The seal defined in claim 11, wherein said strain distributor is formed of material having a durometer about 10 on the Shore "A" scale greater than the material of the central portion.
14. (Original) The seal defined in claim 11, wherein said central portion and projections are formed of elastomeric material and said strain distributor is formed of plastic material.
15. (Original) The seal defined in claim 11, wherein said strain distributor is insert molded in said central portion.
16. (Original) The seal defined in claim 11, wherein said strain distributor is embedded at the juncture of two of said projections.
17. (Original) The seal defined in claim 11, wherein one of said projections has the free end thereof is adapted for scaling against a gasket member.
18. (Original) The seal defined in claim 11, wherein one of said at least three projections is formed at generally right angles to the plane formed by two other of said at least three projections.
19. (Currently Amended) A method of sealing at the juncture of a valve deactivation manifold, an engine block and an engine cylinder head sealed over the cylinders with a head gasket comprising:
 - (a) providing a sealing surface on an edge of the cylinder head gasket;
 - (b) forming a one-piece seal member of elastomeric material with three portions thereof each extending from a common region in a discrete direction; and, forming a strain distributor of material significantly more rigid than said elastomeric material and embedding said distributor in said elastomeric material in said common region; and,

Application No. 10/673,809
Amendment dated 04/12/2006
Reply to Office Action of January 25, 2006

02-ASD-271(EM)

- (c) disposing said seal member at said juncture and contacting ~~said edge-sealing surface~~ the sealing surface with one of said three portions of said seal member.
20. (Original) The method defined in claim 19, wherein said step of contacting includes interdigitating.
21. (Original) The method defined in claim 19, wherein said step of forming a strain distributor includes forming of material having a hardness of at least 10 on the Shore "A" scale greater than said elastomeric material.
22. (Original) The method defined in claim 19, wherein said step of forming a strain distributor includes forming of one of elastomeric, metallic and plastic material.
23. (Original) The method defined in claim 19, wherein said step of forming a one-piece seal member includes molding.
24. (Original) The method defined in claim 19, wherein said step of disposing a distributor includes insert molding.
25. (Original) The method defined in claim 19, wherein said step of forming a seal member includes forming a member having a durometer not greater than about 75 on the Shore "A" scale.
26. (Original) The method defined in claim 19, wherein said step of forming a seal member includes forming one of said three portions oriented at right angles to a plane formed by the other two of said three portions.
27. (Original) A method of sealing at a juncture of a plurality of gasketed members comprising:

Application No. 10/673,809
Amendment dated 04/12/2006
Reply to Office Action of January 25, 2006

02-ASD-271(EM)

- (a) forming a one-piece seal of elastically deformable material having a plurality of prongs each extending in a discrete direction from a common region thereof and configured for sealing the juncture of said members;
- (b) forming a strain distributor of material significantly less deformable than said prongs and embedding said distributor in the common region;
- (c) disposing said seal with prongs sealing on said members and with the strain distributor disposed at the juncture of said three members.